

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the present patent application based on the following remarks are respectfully requested.

By this Amendment, claims 1, 17, 20 and 21 are amended. Support for the amendment to claims 1, 17, 20 and 21 may be found throughout the original disclosure. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, after entry of this Amendment, claims 1-24 will remain pending in the patent application.

It is respectfully submitted that the amendments to claims 1, 17 and 20 do not present any new issues that would require further consideration and/or search. Specifically, entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 as the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not present any new issues that would require further consideration and/or search as the amendments merely amplify issues discussed throughout the prosecution; (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Entry of this Amendment is thus respectfully requested.

Claims 1-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Jenkins (U.S. Pat. No. 6,027,360) in view of Borzi *et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 6,027,360) (hereinafter "Borzi"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. (See MPEP 2142). Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness at least because there is no motivation or suggestion to modify the prior art references and the prior art references do not teach or suggest all the claim limitations.

Claim 1 recites an electronic assembly, which comprises a wiring harness; connectors connected to the wiring harness; and a molded body formed to encapsulate the wiring harness and provide access to the connectors. As conceded by the Examiner on page 3 of the Office Action, Jenkins does not disclose, teach or suggest a molded body as recited in claim 1.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that there are additional features that are absent in Jenkins.

For example, Jenkins does not disclose, teach or suggest an electronic assembly, which comprises, *inter alia*, a molded body formed to completely encapsulate the wiring harness and provide access to the connectors.

Jenkins merely discloses an apparatus for securing terminal connectors 18 (identified by the Office Action as being the “connectors” of claim 1) of a wire harness 22 (identified by the Office Action as being the “wiring harness” of claim 1) to the underside of an electrical junction block 88 (identified with the lower cover 74 of Jenkins as being the “body” of claim 1). (See FIG. 1 of Jenkins).

In response to Applicants’ Amendment of May 8, 2006, the Examiner alleged that junction block 88 and lower cover 74 (identified by the Office Action as “the body” of claim 1) encapsulate part of wire harness 22. The Office Action concluded that Jenkins discloses the limitations of claim 1. (See paragraph 4, page 7 of the Office Action). Applicants respectfully disagree.

In order for junction block 88 and the lower cover 74 to encapsulate the wire harness 22, the wire harness 22 must be enclosed in junction block 88 and the lower cover 74 as if the wire harness 22 were in a capsule. This interpretation is consistent with the definition of the word “encapsulate”. (See definition in Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (10<sup>th</sup> Edition) of the word “encapsulate”: “to enclose in or as if in a capsule”). The language of claim 1 clearly requires that the wire harness 22, not merely part of it, be encapsulated. Thus, by virtue of stating that the junction block 88 and the lower cover 74 encapsulate part of the wire harness 22 (as opposed to the wire harness 22), the Office Action indirectly concedes that the junction block 88 and the lower cover 74 do not encapsulate the wire harness 22.

Jenkins merely discloses that the connectors 18 are arranged within the lower cover 74 and that the lower cover 74 includes U-shaped openings to receive the end portions of the wire harness 22 that are connected to the connectors 18. (See col. 3, lines 20-25, 55-58 and col. 4, lines 10-13 and 19-22, and FIGS. 1-5 of Jenkins). The lower cover 74 is then fitted to the underside of the junction block 88 such that the lower cover 74, the junction block 88 and connectors 18 are stationary with respect to one another and the wire harness can freely move and extend outside the junction block 88. (See col. 4, lines 34-39 and FIG. 5 of Jenkins). Accordingly, unlike claim 1, Jenkins does not disclose, teach or suggest a body that encapsulates the wiring harness and provides access to the connectors.

Out of an abundance of caution and in order to expedite prosecution of the present patent application, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite that the molded body is formed to completely encapsulate the wiring harness and provide access to the connectors. While Applicants believe that this amendment is unnecessary because the use of the adverb “completely” is redundant with the use of the word “encapsulate”, this amendment fully obviates the rejection. Thus, in Jenkins, the wire harness 22 is not “completely” encapsulated by the junction block 88 and the lower cover 74 because, as mentioned previously, the wire harness 22 can freely move and extend outside the junction block 88.

Borzi fails to remedy the deficiencies of claim 1. Borzi merely discloses an assembly for receiving electrical connectors 56 of a wire harness. (*See* col. 3, lines 13-30). Borzi does not disclose, teach or suggest that the assembly is adapted to completely encapsulate the wire harness and provide access to the connectors. As such, any reasonable combination of Jenkins and Borzi cannot result in any way in the invention of claim 1.

Furthermore, and as mentioned previously, Applicants respectfully submit that there is no motivation to modify Jenkins in order to provide the features of claim 1 at least because Jenkins teaches away from the electronic assembly of claim 1. Claim 1 requires that the molded body be formed to (a) completely encapsulate the wiring harness and (b) provide access to the connectors. Jenkins teaches the opposite. In Jenkins, the junction block 88 and the lower cover 74 are adapted to (a) enclose the connectors 18 and (b) provide access to the wire harness 22. (*See*, for example, FIG. 5 of Jenkins). Specifically, as shown in FIGS. 2 and 5 of Jenkins, openings 80 are provided in the lower cover 74 to allow the wire harness 22 to move freely outside the junction block 88 and the lower cover 74. As such, by virtue of teaching the junction block 88 and the lower cover 74 are specifically designed to (a) enclose the connectors 18 and (b) provide access to the wire harness 22, Jenkins teaches away from the electronic assembly of claim 1. (*See* MPEP 2145). For at least this reason, the rejection of claim 1 must be withdrawn.

Claims 2-16 are patentable over Jenkins, Borzi and a combination thereof at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 1 and for the additional features recited therein.

Claim 17 is patentable over Jenkins, Borzi and a combination thereof for at least similar reasons as provided in claim 1 and for the additional features recited therein. Namely, claim 17 is patentable over Jenkins, Borzi and a combination thereof at least because this claim recites an electronic assembly comprising, *inter alia*, a molded body formed to completely encapsulate the wiring harness and to cover a portion of each of the plurality of connectors. As mentioned previously in the discussion related to claim 1, Jenkins and Borzi,

taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose, teach or suggest a molded body formed to completely encapsulate the wiring harness and to cover a portion of each of the plurality of connectors. As such, any reasonable combination of Jenkins and Borzi cannot result, in any way, in the invention of claim 17.

Furthermore, and as mentioned in Applicants' Amendment of May 8, 2006, Applicants respectfully submit that neither Jenkins nor Borzi disclose, teach or suggest a molded body that encapsulates the wiring harness and that has sufficient strength and hardness to act as a frame that is configured to firmly hold the plurality of connectors and the wiring harness as one piece.

Unlike claim 17, Jenkins teaches that the end portions of the wire harness 22 are passed through U-shaped openings 80 of the lower cover 74 and that the connectors 18 are arranged with the lower cover 74 and the junction block 88. As can be seen, *e.g.*, in FIG. 5 of Jenkins, the wire harness 22 is freely moveable and extends outside the junction block 88. As such, the lower cover 74 and the junction block 88 of Jenkins cannot constitute a body (that encapsulates the wiring harness) that has sufficient strength and hardness to act as a frame that is configured to firmly hold the plurality of connectors and the wiring harness as one piece.

Claims 18 and 19 are patentable over Jenkins, Borzi and a combination thereof at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 17 and for the additional features recited therein.

Claim 20 is patentable over Jenkins, Borzi and a combination thereof for at least similar reasons as provided in claims 1 and 17 and for the additional features recited therein. Namely, claim 20 is patentable over Jenkins, Borzi and a combination thereof at least because this claim recites an electronic assembly comprising, *inter alia*, a molded body formed to encapsulate the wiring harness and to cover a portion of each of the plurality of connectors, the molded body including a base portion that extends between the plurality of connectors. As mentioned previously, these features are absent in Jenkins and Borzi. As such, any reasonable combination of Jenkins and Borzi cannot result in any way in the invention of claim 20.

Furthermore, claim 21 is patentable over Jenkins, Borzi and a combination thereof for at least similar reasons as provided in claims 1, 17 and 20 and for the additional features recited therein. Specifically, claim 21 is patentable over Jenkins, Borzi and a combination thereof at least because this claim recites an electronic assembly comprising, *inter alia*, a molded body formed to completely encapsulate said wiring harness and to cover a portion of

each of said plurality of connectors. As mentioned previously, these features are absent in Jenkins and Borzi.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that Jenkins, Borzi and a combination thereof fail to disclose, teach or suggest an electronic assembly wherein, *inter alia*, at least two of the plurality of connectors are in electrical communication with one another. Jenkins is silent as to these features. In Jenkins, the connectors 18 are separate and not in electrical communication. It is noted that the Office Action has failed to identify these features in Jenkins.

Claims 22-24 are patentable over Jenkins, Borzi and a combination thereof at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 21 and for the additional features recited therein.

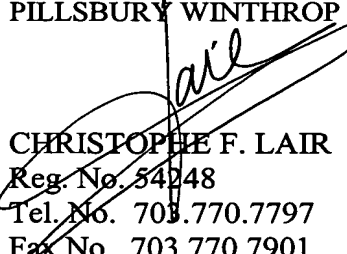
Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Jenkins in view of Borzi are respectfully requested.

Claims 21-24 are newly added to define additional subject matter that is novel and non-obvious. Claims 21-24 are patentable for at least similar reasons as provided above in claim 1 and for the additional features recited therein.

Applicants have addressed the Examiner's rejection and objection and respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. If any point remains in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, please contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,  
PILLSBURY WINTHROP SHAW PITTMAN LLP

  
CHRISTOPHE F. LAIR  
Reg. No. 54248  
Tel. No. 703.770.7797  
Fax No. 703.770.7901

JSB/CFL/smm  
P.O. Box 10500  
McLean, VA 22102  
(703) 770-7900